



Regional Hispanic Chamber Of Commerce

Office Address: 555 E. Ocean Blvd., Suite 638 • Long Beach, CA 90802

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 32474 • Long Beach, CA 90832

Tel: 562-590-7302 • Fax: 562-685-0542

www.RegionalHispaniccc.org • Info@RegionalHispaniccc.org



Sandy Eyles
President & CEO

Tony Guardado
Chairman of
the Board

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Council Member

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Advisory
Council Member

Fernando De Neocades
Advisory
Council Member

Ms. Mary Nichols
Chair, California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Post Office Box 2815
Sacramento, California 95812

Re: AB 32 Draft Scoping Plan and Appendices

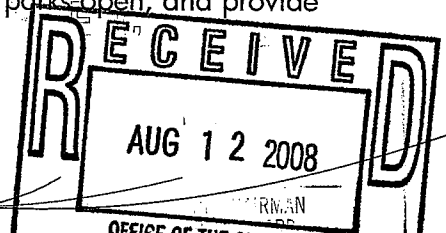
Dear Ms. Nichols:

I am the CEO of the Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (RHCC) strives to meet the needs of an emerging Hispanic community in Long Beach, California. The census illustrated this trend by categorizing 36% of the residents as Hispanic. We deliberately selected the word "regional," over Long Beach Hispanic Chamber, because we see our service area as bigger than the confines of the City of Long Beach. This perspective has given us the unique opportunity to include among our members surrounding cities like San Pedro, South Gate, Wilmington, Huntington Park, South Gate Harbor City, and Los Angeles.

Because so many Hispanic-owned businesses are relatively new and relatively small, they are the most susceptible to the impacts of rising costs. Our members are already being severely affected by high gas prices, rising energy costs, and now the threat of higher taxes and fees to help balance the budget in Sacramento.

AB 32's goals are commendable and we support them in concept. However, while CARB's draft scoping plan acknowledges there will be costs involved, and impacts on small businesses, it does not say how much they will be altogether. In addition, while CARB seems to think these expenses will be offset by long-term energy costs savings that is not going to help our members pay the extra bills it will take up front.

AB 32 implementation costs will come on top of all the increasing operating costs we are already paying. In addition, they will be in addition to all the new taxes, fees, assessments, and other charges being considered at the state, local, and regional level to close the budget deficit, fund local and regional climate-change programs, keep our parks open, and provide essential public services despite skyrocketing energy costs.





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We are seriously concerned that many Hispanic and other minority-owned businesses will be crushed under the cost of AB 32 programs as they are piled on top of all the other taxes and fees already in place or soon to be adopted.

We are not ignoring, by the way, the prospect of new "green jobs," and opportunities for new "green tech" businesses here in California. Nevertheless, the reality is, our small business members probably will not be the ones cashing in on that any time soon. The print shops, dry cleaners, restaurants, service businesses and others that are the traditional launching pads to the American dream for immigrants and minorities will bear the costs but not enjoy immediate benefits.

Eventually that will change, and we look forward to that day, but our honest assessment is that the change will be gradual and much of what our community has gained through hard work and sacrifice will be set back. Moreover, the cost of that will not just be financial – it will be human.

We understand that AB 32 implementation will require long-term policies over the many years provided in the legislation, and that CARB has to consider overall costs during that time. However, many Hispanic small businesses and families live day by day and paycheck by paycheck. To them, what matters is how to get through the day, week, and month without going broke or deeper in debt, and maybe saving a couple of dollars if they are lucky.

We rely on you to keep these realities in mind as you work with CARB and the Administration to design a plan that will have significant long-range impacts on our community and many others.

Sincerely,

Sandy Cajas
Sandy Cajas

President & President

Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce



WAL*MART



MADISON

